



LOS ANGELES COUNTY

**ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL** | **redefining CARE**



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### **DACC Has Adopted Socially Conscious Animal Sheltering**

Today the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, upon a motion by Supervisor Kathryn Barger, directed the Department of Animal Care and Control to report back in 90 days with updates on its adoption of Socially Conscious Animal Sheltering operating practices.

DACC has been practicing Socially Conscious Animal Sheltering as a responsible and humane practice to best protect and serve animals and residents in Los Angeles County. Socially Conscious Animal Sheltering is an acclaimed best practice in animal welfare, and is being adopted by many animal welfare organizations and animal welfare industry associations across the nation. "DACC is proud to stand with these forward-thinking, responsible, and compassionate organizations and will continue to provide innovative solutions to making our communities safer and more humane for animals and residents" says DACC Director, Marcia Mayeda.

Socially Conscious Animal Sheltering practices have been developed in response to the negative consequences of no-kill operating practices that have been repeatedly reported across the country. In order to meet an artificially established live release rate of animals, many no-kill practices require agencies to refuse admission to animals they cannot subsequently offer for adoption, denying these animals a safe haven; overcrowd their animal shelters, with resulting disease outbreaks and suffering; and release dangerous dogs for adoption into the community in order to meet the statistical live release goals, seriously jeopardizing public and animal safety. Many animal welfare organizations, including People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) have expressed deep concern over the negative results of no-kill practices.

For these reasons and others, the Department of Animal Care and Control (DACC) has instead adopted the Socially Conscious Animal Sheltering term for expressing its operating principles. First coined by animal welfare thought leaders in Colorado, and subsequently endorsed by the Colorado Veterinary Medical Association, Socially Conscious Animal Sheltering strives to create the best outcome for all animals by treating them respectfully and alleviating their suffering. The mission is to maximize live outcomes for animals, while also balancing animal well-being and public safety. Fundamental goals of Socially Conscious Animal Sheltering are provided through DACC and its animal care centers to:

- **Ensure every unwanted or homeless pet has a safe place to go for shelter and care.** DACC care centers will not turn away animals in need of assistance.
  - **Making every healthy and safe animal available for adoption.** DACC will not offer for adoption animals that are irremediably suffering or dangerous to the community.
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- **Assess the medical and behavioral needs of homeless animals and ensure these needs are thoughtfully addressed.** DACC, through its medical team and its animal behavior and enrichment team, provides a holistic approach to ensuring each animal's needs are properly addressed.
- **Align DACC policy with the needs of the community.** DACC recognizes its responsibility to the public trust, and ensures its programs and policies reflect and support this obligation.
- **Alleviate suffering and make appropriate euthanasia decisions.** DACC often accepts animals that are irremediably suffering and cannot live without experiencing severe, unremitting pain or other serious health challenges. In these situations, it is most humane to relieve an animal's suffering with compassionate euthanasia.
- **Consider the health and wellness of animals for each community when transferring animals.** DACC participates in many animal transport programs where animals are taken from DACC's care centers to areas of the country that are experiencing a shortage of shelter animals. These win-win programs save thousands of animal lives each year. However, it is also important that animals transported through these programs do not suffer from physical or behavioral defects that could endanger animals or people in their new communities. DDACC transferred 7,763 animals last fiscal year to low-intake animal shelters.
- **Enhance the human-animal bond through thoughtful placements and post-adoption support.** DACC works with potential adopters to ensure animals they select are suitable matches for their lifestyles, the adopter is able to properly care for and handle the animal, and other factors to make certain the placement is successful. DACC provides post-adoption support to adopters to ensure the placement thrives.
- **Foster a culture of transparency, ethical decision-making, mutual respect, continual learning, and collaboration.** DACC remains committed to upholding the highest ethical standards in meeting its mission of protecting people and animals.

DACC's live release for dogs is 88%, and cat live release has increased from 26.5% to 50.5% in the past five years. "Through collaboration with strategic partners, especially the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), DACC has been able to greatly improve outcomes for animals in its care" noted director Marcia Mayeda. "We are committed to continuing our efforts through Socially Conscious Animal Sheltering to save animals' lives and protect our communities."

For more information about Socially Conscious Animal Sheltering, please see: <http://colovma.org/category/of-note/>

For more information about no-kill concerns, please see: <https://www.peta.org/issues/animal-companion-issues/animal-shelters/no-kill-policies-slowly-killing-animals/>

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